

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending, including independent claims 1, 6, 8 and 15.

Applicants' previous response was partly persuasive. Dependent claims 3, 5, 7 and 20 are now found to contain patentable subject matter, but the remaining claims were again rejected over prior art. However, the Examiner has asserted new prior art in the current rejections.

Applicants' invention relates to message processing, one application being transferring messages among vehicles without the need for special equipment for forming, retaining, and destroying a network. Taking claim 1 for discussion, the message processing device can process an incoming message having a header and a body including data to be transmitted, where the header includes a time duration in which the message is valid. When the message processing device receives a message, it determines whether the message is in the valid time duration. If so, a message transferring unit transfers the message on to at least one other message processing device, and an application processing unit reads out the data in the message body and executes predetermined processing. Independent claim 6 recites a message processing device having a similar structure. Here, however, the message includes a header that identifies a geographical zone in which the message is valid. When the message processing device receives a message, it determines whether the device is in the valid geographical zone. If so, a message transferring unit transfers the message on, and an application processing unit reads out the data in the message body and executes predetermined processing.

Independent claims 8 and 15 recite message processing devices that generate and transmit messages of the type specified in claims 1 and 6, respectively. Thus, for example, the device of claim 8 sets a valid time duration for a message header, generates data to be transmitted in the body of the message, and transmits this message. Claim 15 describes a similar device, except it sets a valid geographical zone instead of a valid time duration.

Independent claims 1 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over either U.S. Patent 6,807,270 ("Porter") or U.S. Patent 6,810,045 ("Brune"). Applicants disagree with the rejection.

Porter is directed to the operation of a switching element in a communications network, and more particularly, to providing needed or updated data to the switching element from a centralized data repository (e.g., Abstract; col. 3, lines 54-60). The passage cited by the Examiner (col. 8, lines 25-43) describes a process in which the switching element uses a time stamp to check whether data stored in its local cache is valid. If the data is valid, it is used; if the time stamp has expired, current data is requested from the network data server. This disclosure has nothing to do with Applicants' invention.

Applicants believe Brune also does not affect the patentability of claims 1 and 8. Brune is directed to the situation where data packets containing time-critical data are checked for time validity when the data are received or are to be transmitted (e.g., col. 1, lines 8-12, 57-65; col. 6, lines 31-38; col. 8, lines 12-18). However, Brune does not describe transferring a message to another processing unit when a message is within a valid time duration.

Independent claims 6 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent 6,333,979 ("Bondi"). However, Applicants believe Bondi also is not relevant to the present invention. Bondi describes a system for routing calls to different processing centers based on, e.g., area codes or regions (e.g., Abstract; col. 4, lines 37-67). Bondi, among other things, does not describe a message processing device which checks a geographical zone specified in a message header and transfers the message if the zone is valid.

Therefore, Applicants submit that the cited prior art is not applicable to the pending independent claims, and is even less applicable to the rejected dependent claims which add additional details. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing remarks.

If the Examiner still believes the application is not in condition for allowance, he is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at 312-321-4723.

Respectfully submitted,


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